Press Release

The Cleveland Museum of Art

For Immediate Release
Revised for April 18, 2000

Contact: William Prenevost, ext. 260

CMA TURNS TO THE PUBLIC TO HELP FILL HISTORICAL GAPS IN PROVENANCE OF PAINTINGS IN ITS COLLECTION

List of 370 Paintings Posted Today on Web Site: www.clevelandart.org

CLEVELAND — The Director of the Cleveland Museum of Art, Katharine Lee Reid, has announced that the museum will post a list of approximately 370 paintings from its collection on its web site (www.clevelandart.org) that have gaps in provenance (the historical background of prior ownership) between 1933 and 1945. The posting is the newest stage of the museum's ongoing research, a two-year project conducted by the museum's curatorial division to identify works in the collection with any relationship to art confiscated by the Nazis during the World War II period.

Mrs. Reid states: "This museum is making good on its promise to thoroughly investigate the provenance of its holdings in light of information that has emerged in recent years about the mid-20th-century art market. Our list comprises European paintings with any ownership history missing between 1933 and 1945; and it is intended that this will be specifically helpful to individuals or families with potential claims for Nazi-looted art. Based upon new information that has been made available to the public, especially via the Internet, we are hoping to fill these gaps and respond to legitimate ownership claims that may result."

Guidelines for this research were issued in June 1998 by the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD). Currently, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York have posted similar lists on their web sites.

The Cleveland Museum of Art has 615 European paintings in its permanent collection. About 25% were acquired by CMA prior to 1933 when Nazi looting began, and others may have been in private collections in the United States prior to that date and later acquired by the museum. Curatorial assistant Jill Jiminez has worked full-time at the museum since 1998 to examine the histories of all of these works. Mrs. Reid adds: "For those

(more ...)

11150 EAST BOULEVARD, CLEVELAND, OHIO 44106-1797
TEL 216-421-7340 TDD 216-421-0018 FAX 216-421-0411

unfamiliar with the field, it is common for a museum with a comprehensive collection covering 5,000 years to have works with incomplete ownership histories. Sellers of art frequently seek confidentiality, and dealers and auction houses often do not specify the origins of their offerings."

The list of works being posted includes a range of works from 15th-century to mid-20th-century including Claude Monet's 1868 painting *The Red Hood, Madame Monet* and Henri Matisse's *Interior with an Etruscan Vase* painted in 1940, both listed among the museum's highlights.

The list being posted this afternoon will be accompanied by about 30 to 40 images, and the rest will be added in the following two weeks. Anyone with information to help complete the history of ownership of these works can contact Stephanie Stebich, Administrative Coordinator, via email at provenance@cma-oh.org or by calling 216.421.7340, ext. 251.

# # #